

Water Under the Bridge

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Water Under the Bridge

by Anonymous

Summary

"Then leave!" Ghost suddenly shouts. He turns to Soap with closed fists and a chest that heaves with anger. "If you're so over it, you don't have to be with me! Why the hell are you sticking around if you hate it so much?!"

or

Times are tough. Disagreements happen. People get hurt.

Notes

hiii

this is based on a comment suggestion!!

but don't worry. the service dog and ghost's first seizure will be addressed in time!

enjoy :)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

"So, you mean to tell me that you haven't taken your Topamax in almost four days?!"

The shout bursts from Soap before he has the chance to stop it.

Deep down, he knows that his reaction is unnecessary. Knows that his anger won't change the past--that it will only make the current situation worse. But with the stress of his work day, Ghost's condition, and the ever-looming cloud of bills he needs to pay, the reaction only comes naturally to him.

Soap would never describe himself as a short-tempered guy. He doesn't think anyone would, really. To be a sniper, of course, requires quite a bit of patience. Soap's ability to compose himself under high pressure circumstances is actually a big part of his reputation.

But even Soap can get burnt out, and moving on from one difficulty to the next without the ability to see relief over the horizon is getting unbearable at this point.

Plus, Ghost isn't being much help. Especially not when he's just now informed Soap that he hasn't taken his medicine since Sunday.

"Why do you always have to make everything so dramatic? It's been three bloody days, Soap. It's not that big of a deal," Ghost defends.

The man's back faces Soap as he speaks, upper body bending over the sink and scrubbing the dishes in what has to be a means of distraction. Soap doesn't allow this buffer to work like Ghost wants it to, immediately coming to Ghost's side and looking up at him with a furrowed brow.

"It's almost nine o'clock at night and you're supposed to take your dose in the morning. So, yeah, it's been almost four days. But even if it was just three days, that's not the real problem here, and you know it," Soap challenges.

Ghost ignores the Scot, despite the fact that he's standing inches away from him. It makes Soap want to grab his shoulders and shake him. Make Ghost realize how much pressure he's under and how his refusal to accept his epilepsy for what it truly is only adds to it.

"Hello? Do you have anything to say for yourself? Any kind of explanation at all?" Soap pesters after a second too long of silence.

"I already told you," Ghost says with a voice that's eerily calm. His gaze continues to explicitly avoid Soap's eye. "I fucking *hate* how it makes me feel. I'm always drowsy and dizzy. I have headaches. I can hardly see shit half of the time because my vision gets all blurry, *and* I can barely keep food down because of the nausea. I feel better without it already."

Soap grips the counter beside him, feeling like this is the thousandth time he's explained to Ghost that these things are, "Just side effects."

Ghost slams a plate down into the sink. Soap will have to check for chips in the porcelain later. "Yeah, yeah--I know! Just fucking side effects. But that's easy for you and Dr. Cabrera to say when you don't actually experience them yourself. It's torture! I wanna go back to how I felt before..."

How long before, Soap doesn't know. He's too afraid to ask.

"They're not forever, Simon. You just have to get acclimated to it and then you'll feel normal again," Soap explains.

To this, Ghost massages both temples with the tips of his fingers. In all honesty, it makes Soap grit his teeth in annoyance. What the fuck does he have to be stressed out about?! *Soap* is going to be the one dealing with the repercussions of Ghost's negligence. The consequences of the seizure that sends him falling to the--

Stop.

That's not fair.

Soap would much rather be in his position, standing above it all, than in Ghost's position, vulnerable and thrashing on the floor. Fuck, anyone would.

"I would only go back to normal if it *works*, Johnny. Dr. Cabrera said it would be trial and error to find a good combination for myself. What if I just know that this medication isn't for me?" Ghost suggests. He still doesn't look to his side, but Soap continues to stare him down.

"You can't possibly know that because you didn't even give it a chance!" Soap argues back. He throws his arms out to the side when he emphasizes, "You haven't even been taking it for three weeks and Cabrera said it could take up to a month!"

Ghost instantly shakes his head, closing his eyes and turning the sink

off abruptly. "I can't... I can't do it for that long."

The rage that consumes Soap is insurmountable. Complete disregard for the dangers this could have on Ghost's brain and body feels incredibly self-centered. How does the man expect to get better when he's not even putting in the work?

Soap is doing his part. Why can't Ghost do his?

"You know, I'm getting really tired of this victim mentality that you have," Soap confesses to the man in front of him. "You don't want to *try* to get better, but then you complain when your condition causes issues that *you* prompt by doing stupid shit like this. I mean, fuck, Simon. What do you want?! It's like you only care about your epilepsy when it's convenient for you. But then you don't give two shits about getting better. It's selfish."

Fuck.

He shouldn't have said that.

Soap feels like he'll be regretting those words later, but he knows he can't take them back now. Shit, he's not even sure if he wants to. This is something Ghost needs to hear. Perhaps, not in the way that Soap said it--not in a way that blames him. But he needs to hear it nonetheless. He won't be able to survive if he keeps living like this.

Ghost...doesn't respond. He doesn't even open his eyes. The only indication that he heard what Soap said is the way his knuckles have gone white from the grip he has on the counter.

There is a long, intense silence. So long, Soap considers apologizing.

But then, "I can't believe you just said that to me..."

And the rage returns, just like that.

"Well, who the fuck else is going to?!" Soap shouts.

His chest aches when he sees Ghost shrink away from his screaming, but he doesn't stop. He can't. He's never felt so much stress in his life.

"This is serious, Simon. I don't know why you can't see that. Do you not understand that this could have fatal consequences on your health?! The next seizure you have could fucking *kill* you, all because of the idiotic choices *you* made. And then you expect me to want to

drop everything and fix it?! I'm fucking over it!"

And Soap knows that he should *want* to fix everything--that he should *want* to help his husband, no matter what. And he does. Of course, he does. He will always, always help him. But he's tired of Ghost taking advantage of that.

"Then leave!" Ghost suddenly shouts. He turns to Soap with closed fists and a chest that heaves with anger. "If you're so over it, you don't have to be with me! Why the hell are you sticking around if you hate it so much?!"

Soap can't believe this. "Are you fucking serious right now?!"

"Yes, I'm serious!" Ghost yells, but his voice wavers at the end of his sentence. It doesn't sound much better when he continues. "If I could leave this all behind, I would. But I can't, Johnny. I-I'm..."

A beat.

"I'm *stuck*," Ghost forces out. "I'll never be normal again, and... I would give anything to not have epilepsy in my life, but that's not fucking possible. It is for you, though. And I will never understand why you stay with me when you could... If you could just..."

Soap is mortified as he watches Ghost's anger quickly fizzle out. Perhaps it was never really anger to begin with because the tears gather like they've been waiting all day for their chance, and soon the man's eyes are swimming in pain and darkness.

The sudden emotion seems to take Ghost by surprise as well. He turns his body away from Soap entirely this time, taking a second to compose himself and leaving Soap shocked in his place.

After several seconds of sniffles and composed breaths from his husband, Soap wills himself to reach out to Ghost and say, "Simon..."

Ghost flinches the second Soap's hand touches his back, and he immediately steps out of his reach.

"I wouldn't..." Soap begins, feeling the cloud of guilt loom over him. "I would never..."

Ghost lets out a wet chuckle. "Sounds a lot like you want to..."

Snide comments like that just feed into Soap's reasoning for being mad

in the first place: the fact that Ghost is irresponsible and refuses to take care of himself. It makes Soap's skin itch all over again, that patience bleeding out for good this time, until it's lifeless and irredeemable.

Again, losing his cool, Soap shouts, "Well, how else am I supposed to explain to you that you're only hurting yourself by doing this? You're acting like a child, Simon! Someone needs to step in before you do something you can't come back from."

Ghost places his hands over his ears. "Stop. Can we stop talking about this, *please*."

"No, we're not going to stop until you understand. Until we figure out what the *hell* we're going to tell Dr. Cabrera when she calls for an update next week," Soap says, not willing to relent. "I should probably call her right out now. Figure out if you should just keep taking the medication or give up on it entirely, which you always seem to favor."

Soap's words are terrible, nothing short of heartless and conniving, but he just can't quell his frustrations.

"I don't. I don't give up, Johnny. Just *stop*," Ghost begs. His hands press harder into the sides of his head.

"What would you call this, then, Simon? Getting better?" Soap confronts.

Ghost shakes his head. "I..."

No response is needed. The words continue to tumble out of Soap's mouth. "It makes no sense. If you can't do it for yourself, then why can't you at least do it for me? Do you realize how much shit I do to prevent this from happening to you every day? And yet here you are, not even taking your prescription. The one god damn thing you can do to help. I'm burnt out here, Simon. I can't keep worrying about you like this."

"I'm *sorry*. I'm..." Ghost sways to the side as he says this, pulling one hand away from his ear to catch himself on the counter. "I think I need to sit down."

An evil part of Soap briefly wonders if Ghost is trying to get out of this conversation by pretending to feel poorly. After all, he doesn't seem willing to address the issue that he himself has caused any time soon. But Soap quickly squashes those thoughts and steps forward out of

instinct.

No amount of anger could keep him from helping.

"What's wrong?" Soap asks instantly.

He takes Ghost by the elbow and looks up to gauge the state that he's in. His face looks incredibly pale, eyes still closed and lips pinched in a tight line. The other hand that Ghost has over his ear leaves its position as well, instead landing on the counter so the man can steady himself with both.

"*Nothing*," Ghost insists, though his physical reaction tells another story. "Just need to sit down for a second. *Please*."

Nodding right away, Soap says, "Okay."

He would be an asshole to deny Ghost of this, especially when the risk of him having a seizure is higher now than ever. So, despite how mad he is--despite how much he wants to finish the conversation--he steps out of the man's path, allowing Ghost to push past him and start shuffling towards the living room.

He doesn't get so much as a foot away before collapsing.

"*Christ!*" Soap shouts as he reaches out to catch the man.

Getting a 6'4", 250 pound man to the floor isn't an easy feat, but the adrenaline coursing through Soap's veins allows him to do so with little effort. The second that Ghost's knees give out from underneath him, Soap grabs the man under his arms and lowers him down to the ground as gently as possible.

Ghost is nothing but dead weight at this point, falling into the carpet like he's never felt the force of gravity. It's a scary thing to watch, especially when Soap knows that there's only one thing that could change his demeanor so quickly.

Speak of the god damn devil.

Once Ghost is on the floor, he curls into a ball and hides his face in both hands. In seconds, he's trembling all over, shaking like a chill has overtaken him and he just can't settle his nerves. Soap crouches beside him not long after, in utter disbelief at the impeccable timing.

It's a fucked up thought to have, Soap knows it is, but he can't help

but think to himself, *I told you so.*

But then the words, "I'm so sorry. H-Help me, Johnny," leave Ghost's wobbling lips, and Soap rids his mind of any and all pride. Disgusted that he even had it in the first place.

"What's going on, love? What're you feeling?" Soap asks calmly, running a hand up and down Ghost's exposed bicep.

Ghost hiccups, pulling his hands away from his face and flexing them in the air in front of him. Fingers curled, fingers straight, fingers curled, fingers straight. "Don' know. Jus'..." Fuck, his words are already slurred.

"It's okay. Take a breath," Soap soothes as he continues to caress Ghost's arm. "I think you're about to have a seizure."

Now, when Soap usually informs Ghost of this, the man is too far gone to even care, let alone hear him. By then, he typically just wants it all to be over, knowing there's nothing that can be done at this point to stop it. Basically, he inevitably accepts his fate.

However, that is not how this instance plays out.

This time, instead of Ghost finally letting go and falling into the seizure seconds later, the man sits up in a panic and holds his weight by using the wall behind him. He's fighting it off, breathing now rapid and shallow and wide eyes boring into Soap's gaze.

"No, I don'..." Ghost begins, hardly able to hold his head up. "I don' want--"

"Lay back down," Soap orders softly. He's really not in the mood to deal with Ghost's rebellion, no matter how scared he is for him. "You shouldn't be sitting up when the seizure starts."

Again, the mention of this word throws Ghost into a further panic. He begins hyperventilating and becomes restless. Soap has to hold him in place with a hand on his chest. Ghost shakes his head ferociously and gasps for air as he says, "I don'... I don' want to..."

"You don't have a choice," Soap replies impatiently.

Not only is the Scot still agitated from the argument that just happened, but he's frustrated at the way that Ghost won't listen to him. He can't understand why the man is so freaked out. They've done

this a million times.

But nonetheless, with a single sob, Ghost falls back to the ground once again.

Since the man is settled and doesn't seem to be strong enough to get up again, Soap leaves him for a second to grab a pillow from the couch. He hates that it has come to this--hates that he can't even be mad at Ghost right now because they have more urgent things to worry about. Their earlier conversation is left completely unresolved, and he'd be surprised if it ever will be.

Ghost probably won't even remember it.

"*Johnny*, please don' leave me," Ghost suddenly cries from his position on the floor.

And, despite his frustration, Soap can't deny the way his heart sinks. He runs back over to the man with the pillow, crouching in front of him again and assuring him that, "I'm not going anywhere. Just relax for me, okay?"

The moment Soap is in Ghost's line of vision, he reaches for him shakily, uncoordinated hands.

"M'sorry," he cries, more terrified than Soap has ever seen him before. "Please, don'... Don' leave me. Didn' mean--"

"Shhh," Soap hushes, placing the pillow under Ghost's now stiff neck. "I'm not gonna leave you, Si. Just calm down."

And even though Ghost's face begins to twitch erratically, he visibly continues to fight the feeling. "Don' wanna..." He sobs, and then admits, "Don' wanna die, J'nny."

Absolutely everything comes crashing down.

Soap immediately feels sick to his stomach at the pitiful words. Because *he* was the one to put those thoughts in Ghost's head in the first place. *He* was the one to suggest that Ghost's next seizure would be his last--that it would be something that he 'can't come back from.'

Fuck, he shouldn't have jumped to such extremes. Because now here Ghost is, shaking uncontrollably and convinced that he's going to die. And there are no words that Soap could possibly say that would make him think otherwise.

The panic is just going to make the seizure worse.

"*Fuck*, alright," Soap hisses to himself. He then cradles Ghost's face with both of his hands, hoping it's enough to grab his waning attention. "Listen to me, baby. You're not gonna die, okay? Do you hear me?"

Ghost probably doesn't, if his rolling eyes and progressive wheezing is anything to go by. Not to mention the fact that his entire body has gone limp at this point. It'll be starting any second now, and the man is still mumbling incomprehensible words and subconsciously reaching for Soap.

The Scot pulls away from Ghost then, knowing he'll need the room to flail. This doesn't make the man very happy, as he starts groaning just a second later.

"You're okay, Simon," Soap reassures, even as Ghost's neck pulls violently to the side and his elbows lock. "You're gonna be alright. It's fine."

The words feel pointless on Soap's tongue, even to himself. No amount of comfort will be able to rid either of their minds from the things he had said earlier. The comments he made about Ghost's potential death.

Although the assumptions were quite dramatic, they're still a very real possibility. *Any* seizure could take Ghost from this world. But this one? Caused by a lack of medication and made worse by crippling anxiety? Yeah, the odds aren't looking too good. And if anything were to truly happen, Soap would never forgive himself. Ever.

The thought of a seizure coming to an end and Soap *isn't* able to hear Ghost's gargled breathing is enough to make him dizzy with dread. The thought of trying to shift him and feeling no fight in return. The thought of the color fading from Ghost's face, leaving him a sickening shade of grays and blues and purples--

Soap can't fucking do this.

Scrambling to his feet, the Scot rushes to the kitchen sink and empties his guts into the garbage disposal. The acidic taste of vomit burns the back of his throat, and the feeling of guilt is so overwhelming that he almost doesn't hear it.

The thumping. The gurgles. The seizure has already begun.

Soap takes a second to rinse his mouth out and glance at the clock on the oven before running back to his husband's side.

And it doesn't matter how many times he sees it. Soap's heart always immediately sinks at the sight of his husband. But this time is different. This seizure appears to be much more aggressive, ripping pain yelps and spastic moans from the man in front of him.

Ghost's elbows remain locked, but his arms thrash around like he's trying to fight someone off. His legs don't kick as much at first, but they vibrate so quickly that it looks like it hurts. All of it looks like it hurts, actually. His tense, erratic neck muscles slam his head repeatedly into the pillow under him, and his core clenches at such a brutal pace that his back keeps hitting the wall behind him.

Plus, on top of it all, Ghost is letting out heart-wrenching wails, a sound that is almost inhumane in nature. His eyes can no longer be seen, only the whites of them visible from behind his rapidly blinking eyelids, so Soap tells himself that the sounds are coming from him subconsciously. But there's always that part of Soap that wonders.

What if Ghost *is* aware of the pain he's in while having a seizure, and simply can't recall it once it's over? It's too much to consider in this moment, especially when Ghost cries out louder than Soap has ever heard before.

He must be petrified in there.

"It's alright, darling," Soap promises into the lonesome air. He doesn't know that. No one knows that. But he can't accept the contrary. "You're going to be okay. Just keep breathing through it, love."

What is Soap's words subconsciously convince Ghost to give in this time? To let go and accept the fact that he's not getting enough oxygen and that his heart isn't getting enough blood? Then Soap really will be the cause of all of this. The cause of Ghost's death.

Fuck, that can't happen. It can't. It can't. It just can't.

Ghost is crying.

"Shhh, it's okay," Soap whispers, feeling the tears gather in his own eyes. He doesn't understand how this is fair. Why does Ghost have to go through this?

Another glance at the clock tells Soap that it's already been a minute

since the seizure started, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon. In fact, it seems to be getting worse.

The longer it goes on, the more intense the gurgling and wheezing gets. Ghost's lips quickly turn to a shade of blue, and his spasming abs begin to flip the man over on his front with every jerk. Suddenly, Soap is reminded of the image he created in his head earlier. Not only can the man suffocate on his own saliva, but he can also stop breathing from his face being pressed into the carpet.

Soap wants to badly to pull him back, but the force with which his seizure is happening will only put the both of them in danger. So the Scot can only watch as Ghost inches closer and closer to floor beneath him, almost teasing at how close he is to smothering himself.

"Oh, my god," Soap cries into his own hands. He watches in horror as blood infused slobber starts foaming from Ghost's mouth. He's hardly taking in breaths at this point, but the whimpers are still prominent.

Soap looks at the clock. Well past two minutes.

"You've gotta start coming out of it for me, baby. It's already been two minutes," Soap begs.

This doesn't seem to be a concern to Ghost's body at all. He continues to seize consistently, one of his arms now trapped under the weight of his body and contorting his shoulder in a devastating way. He just won't. stop.

"Come on, Si. *Please*," Soap just about sobs. "Breathe, sweetheart. I can't... I can't fucking lose you like this."

The vulnerability isn't enough to stop the awful sight, so the seizure continues for another minute or so, one of the longest seizures Ghost has ever had. Soap pats his pockets to make sure his phone is there, just in case he needs to call an ambulance.

He doesn't need to, it turns out, because the seizure abruptly stops altogether.

It's insane how it happens, sometimes. One minute Ghost will be flailing so viciously that it looks like he's on the brink of death, and then the next he's completely still, settling back into the ground like his body was never moving to begin with.

The second Soap knows it's over, he reaches out to flip Ghost over

onto his side again, letting out a breath he didn't know he was holding when he sees the color coming back to Ghost's lips. His eyes are fully closed this time, no indication that he's conscious in the slightest, and his body is so limp that Soap holds an ear to his chest to make *sure* that he really is breathing again.

"Simon?" Soap calls once he knows he's...alive. He places a hand on the man's cheek and wipes away the red saliva that has accumulated there with his bare hand. He brushes it off on his own pants before continuing. "Are you with me, darling?"

When Soap gets no response, he peels Ghost's eyelids back himself, finding wandering eyes and blown pupils. The motion seems to agitate the man somewhat, because he starts shifting away and cracking his eyes open himself with a groan.

"That's it. You're alright. Just come back to me," Soap says shakily, looking up and down Ghost's body for injuries.

Ghost whines pitifully, not happy at the pain he must be feeling.

It's then that Soap remembers to write down the day, time, and duration of this seizure, quickly typing it into his notes app to later show Dr. Cabrera. The thought of the neurologist also reminds Soap of the service dog program they have been in contact with.

They had informed both Ghost and Soap that to train a dog to accommodate to one's personal needs, they have to become familiar with the individual. The way that they do this is to get the dog acclimated to a scent. One that's associated with the participant's medical emergency.

In Ghost's case, they requested that Soap wipe the man's palms and armpits, as well as take a swab of the inside of his mouth as a means of sampling. The dogs will then train with alerting to this smell. The only catch is that this must be done immediately following a seizure. This is to allow the dog to become familiar with the scent they will be looking for.

"Wait here, love."

Hoping to catch Ghost while he's still weak and less irritable, Soap jumps to his feet and goes into their bedroom to grab the kit. It contains everything he needs, even the bag he will be mailing it to the facility in.

When he returns, he finds that Ghost's whining has become more insistent and that he's begun to flip himself over onto his back and out of the recovery position. Soap kneels down in an instant to stop this progression.

"Don't move, Simon. I need you to stay still for one second," Soap informs, rolling Ghost back on his side. The second the man's body puts pressure on shoulder again, he cries out with a sharp squeal, trying to move away with little success.

"S'op, *stop*," Ghost whines, almost unintelligible.

"What's wrong?" Soap questions.

Ghost doesn't answer, eyebrows furrowed and expression lethargic. He looks out of it, doesn't appear to be strong enough to fight back, so Soap knows this is his one opportunity to get the samples he needs without setting him off.

"I just need to wipe your hands and swab your mouth, Ghost," Soap explains as he opens the kit and grabs what he needs. "It'll only take a second and then it'll be over, okay? I promise."

"*Nooo...*" Ghost whimpers as Soap gently opens his mouth.

It feels wrong intruding on the man's body when he's very clearly not supportive of the action, but Soap just tells himself that they don't have a choice here. If they wait too long after a seizure--wait for Ghost to no longer be postictal--the scent won't be as potent for the dogs. So he *has* to invade Ghost's personal space, no matter how uncomfortable it is for either of them.

Soap runs the cotton swab all around the inside of Ghost's cheeks, remaining calm even when his husband sobs and bites down on the intrusion. "I know, baby. But we have to do this."

Once he's safely stored that sample, Soap moves on to the cotton pads that are provided and carefully separates them. Ghost is becoming increasingly upset as time goes on, normally used to gentle touches and encouraging words by now. His cries are getting more urgent and his lips have started pulling into a deep frown.

"Just a few more," Soap reassures.

He begins wiping down both of Ghost's sweaty palms, making sure to get in between his fingers. However, it's the second that he flips Ghost

over onto his back to wipe under his arms that they have a real problem. Right when Soap goes to lift the man's right arm, he fucking *screams* bloody murder.

But before Soap even has a chance to calm him, he suddenly feels a massive blow to the front of his face--his nose, in fact. And his vision goes away for a few seconds from shock. Once the black spots start to slowly disappear, the pain hits, and Soap curses at the aching, burning sensation that radiates from his nose.

"Fuck!" Soap shouts, putting two and two together when he sees Ghost's bloody knuckles still clenched in a fist.

Ghost just punched him in the face.

Not intentionally, of course. When Ghost comes out of a seizure, he's typically scared and confused and, at times, a bit defensive. But he has never resorted to violence. He's never even been strong enough. So it baffles Soap that he was able to do such damage in the first place.

The postictal man is hyperventilating at this point, shuffling away from Soap and pushing himself into a sitting position against the wall. His eyes are wide and frantic, bloody hand tremulously holding the shoulder Soap had just moved. He looks to be in pain, but Soap can't even register that when the pain he himself feels causes tears to spring in his eyes.

"Jesus," Soap hisses as he looks down to find that blood is gushing out of his nose. It's in his mouth. It's on his clothes. It's staining his hands.

Soap doesn't even have the energy to tell Ghost to lay back down, the hit rocking him so hard that he wonders if he's concussed. Almost one hundred percent positive that his nose is broken, Soap forces himself to his feet and stumbles to the bathroom. Leaving Ghost behind.

But it'll only be for a moment. Just a moment.

Standing in front of the mirror is more terrifying than Soap expected it to be. There is blood *everywhere*. Head wounds are no joke. And when the Scot presses a finger into the bridge of his nose to inspect the damage, his vision goes white and his ears ring from the piercing agony.

Yup. Definitely broken.

Soap wants to me mad. He wants to lose his temper and be further

fueled by their argument and go on to blame Ghost for all of the problems in their life. But he can't. Because Ghost can't help it when he's like this, and that fact alone is enough to make Soap feel nothing but guilt and pity.

Knowing he needs to go to the hospital, Soap washes away as much as he can with water and uses the destroyed hand towel to put pressure on the bleeding. The blood doesn't slow in the slightest, which only freaks the Scot out more, but he knows he has to get back to Ghost as quickly as possible. So he leaves the bathroom in stride.

When he returns to the area between their kitchen and living room, he finds Ghost to not be in the spot he left him. For a second, he panics, but then his eyes catch the silhouette of someone huddled in the corner of the room.

Ghost.

"Steamin' Jesus," Soap hisses to himself as he makes his way over.

He finds that Ghost is pressing himself into the wall as much as he can, teary eyes looking around distrustfully and bloody hand still gripping the same shoulder. It's hard to miss the fact that he's shaking, likely scared and confused after being left alone following his seizure. Likely not even knowing he *had* a seizure at all.

Soap crouches down in front of the man, free hand held out in solidarity. He's not sure of how aware Ghost is, so he knows he needs to take it slow with the lad.

"Hey, baby," Soap greets. He can no longer breathe through his nose, so his voice sounds muffled. "Are you okay?"

Even after all of this. Even when Soap is urgently holding a bloody towel to his nose, Ghost is still his first priority. The only concern he has about the blood is if it's going to startle his husband.

Ghost's eyes slowly flick over to the Scot, droopy and tired and begging for relief. When he seemingly notices the mess that covers the entirety of Soap's front, his eyes go wide all over again. He reaches his bloody hand out, probably wanting to see for himself.

"Johnny?" Ghost whimpers.

But when the man's own hand comes into view, Ghost's gaze quickly turns towards the blood. Sluggishly looking back and forth between

his knuckles and Soap's face, he slowly connects the dots. There's no stopping the large tears that immediately start pouring down, let alone the tragic sobs.

"Did I...?"

Soap takes his hand. "Shhh, it's okay."

"Hur' you...?" Ghost whimpers, his bottom lip wobbling as he looks up for answers.

"No, darling. It was an accident. You didn't mean to," Soap explains, more distracted by gauging how *Ghost* is feeling. "Are you hurt? Does your shoulder feel funny?"

This explanation isn't very well received. Ghost is full on weeping at this point, pulling his hand away from Soap and tucking himself further into the corner he's holed up in. It's like he wants to distance himself from the Scot, scared he'll hurt him again.

"M'sorry," Ghost sobs. "So sorry, J'nny."

Fearing that Ghost's shoulder is out of socket and knowing his nose will only continue to bleed, Soap quickly rationalizes, "You don't have to say sorry, sweetheart. Look, let's just get to the hospital so they can check us both out, okay? I want to make sure your shoulder isn't hurt."

"M'just..." Ghost chokes out, hiccupping. "I'm so *sorry*."

Soap pouts, heart-broken. "I know, baby. But it's okay. I promise."

Ghost still doesn't seem convinced.

Having an idea, Soap prompts, "You wanna make it up to me?"

Ghost just nods, squeezing more tears out and biting his lip to hold in his cries.

"How about I help you stand up and we get you to the doctor's and see what's going on with that shoulder of yours? You can lean on me and I'll take us out to the car. How does that sound?" Soap proposes.

Eager to make Soap happy, the larger man quickly agrees. Though Ghost's legs buckle under himself a few times and Soap has to catch him, the two are able to shuffle their way to the car. The Scot settles his husband in the passenger seat before going around and getting behind the wheel.

Right when he starts the car and rests his elbow on the center console, Ghost hugs Soap's arm to his chest and weeps into his shoulder. Just apologizing over and over again. Saying he didn't mean to. Begging Soap to understand.

It hurts more than the blow to his nose.

After quite a while in the hospital, Soap is finally permitted to go see Ghost.

By then, there's a cast over his nose, held down by medical tape and making him look far more beat up than he feels. The whole time Soap has been there, he's been concerned with how Ghost is doing more than himself. They informed him that Ghost's shoulder was indeed dislocated by the seizing, but that's all they will tell him.

Once Soap is discharged himself and taken to Ghost's room, he finds himself feeling nervous. He doesn't know what to expect. Will Ghost still be upset? Will he be mad? Will he remember the argument?

There's only one way to find out.

Soap opens the door slowly and quietly. For some reason, he doesn't expect what he sees.

Ghost is propped up on the bed in his normal clothes. No tubes. No beeping. No emergency around. The only indication that he's hurt is the sling that his injured arm is in. He looks out of it, from the doorway, head tilted back and eyes watching the TV screen with little interest. But when he hears the door open, he slowly turns his head to the side...and smiles.

"J-Johnny?" Ghost croaks. Hopeful.

"Hey, love," Soap smiles back, shutting the door behind him and walking up to the hospital bed.

Ghost's eyes never leave Soap once, following his every move until he's sitting in the uncomfortable chair not too far away. Once Soap sits down, Ghost reaches out towards him with watery eyes and says his name again. And again. It makes Soap chuckle.

He's *definitely* doped up on pain meds.

"How're you feeling?" Soap asks sincerely, bringing Ghost's knuckles to his lips and kissing him there.

For a while, Ghost doesn't answer. He just watches Soap like he's the most beautiful thing he's ever seen. So Soap, gently, asks him again. "I'm okay..." he answers.

Soap smiles. "Good. I'm so glad."

"Hm..." Ghost agrees. He then looks down at his lap and asks, "What happened?"

"Well..." Soap begins, not sure how to break this news to Ghost. "You had a seizure earlier. Dislocated your shoulder during it. So I brought you to the hospital so they could help you."

"Oh."

"But you'll be okay. Just a few weeks in the sling and you should be back to normal," Soap explains.

Appearing to slowly recall the events from earlier, Ghost mutters the words, "I hur' you..."

This makes Soap shake his head in an instant. "You didn't. You weren't trying to hurt me, love. You were just hurt yourself. And you were scared and confused. No one could've known you were going to react like that. But it's nothing you could have helped. And I'm not mad at you."

"No..." Ghost says, like he already understands that part. "Hur' you earlier. With...the medicine."

Fuck.

He remembers.

Soap sighs. "I was frustrated," he explains. "I was upset that you weren't being truthful with me. But that doesn't give me the right to say the things that I did, and I'm so sorry. Everything was just...weighing on me and I felt like it was my fault and I thought you were being immature when you were actually just struggling and--"

"Shouldn't...shouldn't have done that, though. To you," Ghost slurs in response. "Shouldn't lie..."

Letting the words really hit him, Soap eventually nods in agreement. "You're right. You still shouldn't lie to me about it. You need to tell me the truth, let me know when things become too much. I don't want you to suffer, baby. I want you to feel better. But I can't do that if you leave me in the dark."

Ghost nods.

"That doesn't mean my words were appropriate, though. And I'm sorry. I just want you to know that they came from a place of worry and love, not hate. Okay?"

Ghost nods once again. "I know. And m'sorry, too. Won' lie to you anymore."

Releasing a breath he didn't even know he was holding, Soap leans forward to fall into Ghost's chest. As expected, the man holds him tight, comforting the both of them in the process.

"Thank you, Simon," Soap whispers. "I love you."

"I love you, Johnny."

A brief pause.

"Now, let's get Dr. Cabrera on the phone and see what she can do for us."

End Notes

thank u for reading!

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